



Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MSCIP) Public Involvement Process Summary

This document summarizes the public input process designed and facilitated by Group Solutions, Inc. as well as outlining several recommended next steps.

The process was initiated with approximately 70 potential project alternatives the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had emerged through prior meetings, outreach, mail and legwork.

More than 75 state and local government representatives and Federal Agency partners attended the first Regional Coordination meeting on April 7^h in Biloxi. To the starting list of project candidates, participants added new recommendations to large-scale aerial maps of Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties. Approximately 70 more projects were added to the original project list. The meeting was well-attended and characterized by observing, collegial dialogue. Significant 2-way learning was observed by both meeting attendees and Corps subject matter experts.

The combined list of project alternatives was presented at 3 Public Input Meetings in Jackson, Harrison and Hancock County between April 10-13th. Approximately 60 additional project candidates were added to the county maps.

Wireless keypads were used to enable public workshop attendees to respond a series of process questions. A small, but motivated and involved group of citizenry participated in these meetings. The preferences expressed should not be interpreted as a quantitative, statistically-significant public poll, but rather as qualitative directional guidance.

In round 1 of public input meetings there was general consensus on:

- Linking Corps planning to the Governor's plan and other agencies
- Recycling clean concrete debris for breakwaters & oyster reefs
- Balancing natural and engineered solutions
- Projects should focus on long-range solutions
- Expectations for moderate to much more protection from future storms
- Dunes were the preferred beach restoration alternative
- Business return and homebuilding are perceived to be the biggest indicators of Katrina recovery
- The need for continuing public input in the comprehensive planning process

There was incomplete consensus on:

- Near-term criteria were understood and appropriate
- The selected projects will be beneficial
- Projects have been distributed fairly across Counties
- The selected projects meet the near-term criteria
- A balance of natural and engineered solutions has been selected

Widely differing assumptions and perceptions were evident on:

- Buyout of private or flood-prone lands
- The desirability of a reduced footprint or restricting coastal rebuilding

A round 1 web cast confirmed the practicality of involving a broader group of stakeholders unable to attend public meetings due to time or distance.



The list of project alternatives was screened using three stringent criteria.

- The problem had to be related to, or caused, by the hurricanes of 2005 and included in the December 2005 Authorization from Congress
- The solution can be implemented in the near-term. It needs to be pre-engineered, easily done and accomplished with little to no opposition and no unresolved issues
- The action compliments the effective work of others and supports the objectives of State and/or local plans for recovery of Coastal Mississippi.

12 short-term project candidates emerged from this process. These were reviewed in a second Regional Coordination meeting and a second round of public input meetings. Several additional recommendations were offered and evaluated. Perhaps most significantly, no objections were raised to any of the near-term recommendations.

Public workshops were held May 1-3 in Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties. These workshops confirmed that there is strong consensus that continuing public input is expected in the comprehensive planning process

There is general, but not complete consensus on:

- Near-term criteria were understood and appropriate
- The selected projects will be beneficial
- Projects have been distributed fairly across Counties
- The selected projects meet the near-term criteria
- A balance of natural and engineered solutions has been selected

There are differing assumptions and perceptions that the projects selected will make a difference in future flooding and tidal surge events

A second-round web casts attracted a larger audience and was highlighted by energetic, technical questioning of the subject matter experts.